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Denise Nix

Position: Income Tax Specialist

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Volume 21, Issue 528 • August 20-September 2, 2015

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Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671
Assistant Managing Editor Shane Lueck 612-436-4692
Editorial Assistant Linda Raines 612-436-4694
Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner
Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer
Copy Editor Bridget Rocheford-Kearney
Contributors Kathleen Bradbury, Thomas Ehnert, Nell Gelhaus, Justin Jones, Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Shane Lueck, Brandon McCray, Jennifer Parelo, Randy Stern, Joy Summers, John Townsend, Bradley Traynor, Carla Waldemar

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690
Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
Account Executives Robert Felton 612-436-4697, Richard Kranz 612-436-4675, Morgan Ross 612-436-4696
Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer
Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator Linda Raines 612-436-4694
Sales Lead Specialist Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693
Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
National Sales Representative Rivendell Media 212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678
Graphic Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679
Photographer Sophia Hantzes
Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.
President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665
Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666
Chief Financial Officer Mary Lauer 612-436-4664
Distribution Manager/Administrative Assistant Molly Gosh 612-436-4660
Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford
Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013)

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For our Privacy Policy, go to LavenderMagazine.com/resources/privacy-policy

Lavender Media, Inc.

7701 York Ave S, Suite 225, Edina, MN 55435
 612-436-4660 **Office**
 612-436-4685 **Fax**
 612-436-4664 **Subscriptions**
 612-436-4660 **Distribution**
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CONTRIBUTORS



E.B. BOATNER



BRADLEY
TRAYNOR



JOHN TOWNSEND



CARLA
WALDEMAR



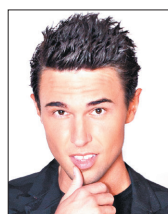
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Triggers & Trauma

As we approach the start of a new school year, it's time to think about students and education, schools and learning. A concept that has been popping up on my radar for a while is that of "trigger warnings." When some people and publications post links to articles online that include very graphic or shocking content, sometimes the introductions include the words "trigger warning" and whatever the topic might cover ("trigger warning: rape, attack"). Trigger warnings are to inform people that something might cause alarm or a strong emotional response, a recurrence or a reminder of a past trauma. Then, you can choose whether you want to engage with the content or avoid it.

There is a debate going in higher education about trigger warnings and whether or not they become a detriment to learning. Syllabus contents and lectures are being challenged for their triggering topics on the one hand; that learning can't happen when one is reliving a traumatic experience. On the other hand, it's argued that, by skipping the topic due to it being too graphic or potentially traumatic, the risk is that we're being over-sensitive and providing a disservice to the learning process. That's an oversimplification and I'm not going to get into that here; instead, I'd rather talk about stopping trauma to begin with.

We're not in a post-traumatic society. We're still living what the trigger warnings are about. A college student carried a mattress around campus last year to silently protest campus sexual assault, after her alleged rapist was cleared in a campus hearing. Trans students are campaigning "We Just Need to Pee" because of not being able to use the restrooms that

align with their gender identities. Bullying is being written out of policy, but is still a moment-to-moment reality for so many in the rainbow community in our schools. Triggers come later, the trauma is now.

Stop the trauma.

Some trauma is out of our control. Sometimes people are victims of trauma and the situation could not have been avoided with any help of a bystander. What if we can help someone avoid trauma in our daily lives, though? Like plainclothes superheroes? Perhaps when we proactively anticipate and cope ahead for what could be a difficult situation we reduce the chance of a trauma occurring. When we proactively anticipate a difficulty, we can offer to go to the restroom with our trans friends using the buddy system, thereby potentially avoiding conflict (or offering assistance during conflict). When we are prepared for a scenario of bullying, we know ahead of time how to interject and speak up, how to offer support, and how to contact the correct authorities at the school in case the bullying could not be quelled. That when we ask for help or offer help, we might turn around a situation that could have been traumatic and is remembered for the positive that came out of it, instead. It's a story of victory, rather than a story that would require a trigger alert.

Let's continue to try to author our own stories on our own terms, demanding support from our schools as well asking support from our friends and family.

With you in solidarity,

Andy ■

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All Creatures Great and Small

If he hadn't had a name, hadn't been a celebrity with a public and a following, his violent death would have passed unnoticed.

But Cecil (for Cecil Rhodes) was a lion well known to visitors at the Hwange National Park in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe, and he'd been collared, tracked, and studied for some years by scientists at Oxford University.

So, when he was illegally lured away from safety and killed — shot with a crossbow by a Bloomington, Minnesota, big-game hunting dentist, suffered nearly two days until dispatched by a rifle, beheaded, skinned, his radio collar destroyed, and his remains dumped outside the preserve — the media went wild.

Facebook overflowed with invective and suggestions for retribution, but mob mentality and revenge aren't a solution. Cecil is still dead, and a few days later, five elephants were poached for their tusks in the Tsavo West National Park in Kenya.

One supporter called taking a trophy animal "harvesting," for the purpose of "honoring" the creature; difficult to tell from the dentist's earlier photograph, grinning toothily while clutching a dead leopard like a gunny sack of potatoes. The dentist paid some \$50,000 to kill Cecil.

Some cried out that Cecil's death had elicited more outrage than those of many humans, among them Sandra Bland and Choctaw medicine man Rexdale W. Henry, who, like Bland, was found dead in his jail cell, after being arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi, for not paying a minor traffic citation.

Remember that police department? Activists James Earl Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman fell into their hands back in 1964 and their remains were finally discovered buried in an earthenware dam. Only seven of eighteen individuals charged were convicted — of minor violations — but outrage over their murders led to the Civil Rights Act of that year and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Cecil was an animal, not a human, but all lives matter. Cecil's death resonates because it stunningly illustrates the degree of entitlement held by those who feel they can target anything they covet: an endangered animal, a human being, whatever gets in their way. Caring for Cecil's killing, I assert, in no way diminishes my distress at the jail deaths of five women of color in July alone.

Like Bland, Henry, Sam DuBose, and too many others, Cecil was treated as a thing. An object to be used by the monied or powered who assume that money entitles them to do what they will with others' lesser lives. But entitlement is not just a white man's (and woman's) sickness; consider the massacre of those elephants and looming extinction of rhinos, murdered to provide ivory and horn to the Far East, supposedly to enhance male sexual potency.

I hope that Cecil's killer pays in full measure for his action, and, more particularly, that readers will relate this one instance of overweening power not only to animals, but to the rapidly accumulating cases of human abuse and killings here at home. ■

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Zach is one of the newest additions to the First Equity Mortgage team. With a Bachelor's Degree in Communications and a background in teaching English as a second language, Zach, knows how to tell you what you need to know each step of the way. Connecting with people from every background is Zach's passion and his greatest skill. He is excited to bring the same enthusiasm to getting you into your dream home. Zach is there with every client on every little detail making sure things aren't just done, but also understood and even enjoyed. His upbeat attitude is infectious, and he will make sure that buying a home is what it should be: FUN!

Zach spends free time volunteering. His projects include Amigos de las Americas where he administered Rabies Vaccinations to animals in Ecuador and the Twin Cities to Chicago AIDS Ride. He has also been very active in the LGBT community ever since moving to Minneapolis from Duluth and working at the Gay 90's.

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Hairspray. Photo by Vicki Madsen

EXTREMITIES

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www.darkstormy.org

You may have seen the film version of this provocative drama about rape, but when done well on stage, it is far more layered than on screen. The good news, artistically speaking, is that Dark and Stormy is just the right group to make it work. Director Mel Day says that playwright William Mastrosimone “has brilliantly orchestrated a situation where all the characters are fully fleshed, even though some have committed atrocious acts. The play is ultimately about power dynamics, how people gain and lose power, but I also think this is about the need to be recognized as fully human. Raul (James Rodriguez) carefully plots a crime, but he still has a family. Marjorie defends herself, but maybe crosses some lines. Terry (Tracey Maloney) and Patricia (Emily Bridges) attempt to help Marjorie but ultimately want to protect themselves. People think they know how they would handle a crisis, but once they experience it, their sense of humanity is shaken, and they will do anything to gain it back.”

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Director Lynn Musgrave shares, “With this play, playwright Aaron Sorkin takes a step he’s not used before — he blasts away the ‘fourth wall’ and has Philo Farnsworth (Pierce Huxtable)

and David Sarnoff (Mark Mattison) address the audience directly — along with each other. Aside from being incredibly educational (it’s about the invention of television, after all) this is an imagined intellectual battle between two giants of the time. (Farnsworth and Sarnoff never met.) They were both geniuses, without question. They were both self-

taught, self-made men. But there the similarities end. Farnsworth only truly lived in his laboratories. Sarnoff stepped into the fast lane called Capitalism and never looked back.”

She continues, “This, then, is their virtual battleground. The two face off on stage, suspended in light with a gulf of darkness between them, each absolutely determined to tell his story, his ‘truth.’ David Sarnoff, the President of RCA, founder of NBC, and Philo Farnsworth, inventor of television and early fusion development. Their exchanges are the stuff of which actors’ and directors’ dreams are made.”

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Bloomington Civic Theatre continues its stream of big popular musicals. Celebrated director-choreographer, Michael Matthew Ferrell, says that *Hairspray* “has the most choreography of any show I have worked on to date. Since it all revolves around a dance TV show there is a ton of movement. It just keeps coming at you. It has also been very rewarding to work on a show about discrimination and racial segregation. The cast and I



Extremities. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

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have had many discussions about this and guests have come into rehearsal to help us tell a realistic account of what was going on in the '60s, when the show is set. Many of the same issues are present today, making it even more relatable and relevant."

MADE HERE - INTERSECTIONS: VISIBLE BODIES: TRANSGENDER NARRATIVES RETOLD - TWIN CITIES

Through Sept. 30
319 N. 1st St., Minneapolis
www.madeheremn.org/showcases

The Hennepin Theatre Trust's Made Here offerings include trans representation. One of these is *Visible Bodies: Transgender Narrative Retold - Twin Cities* with work by Jie Wronsky, Adja Gildersleve, and Garrett Hoffman. Their group's statement says: "We believe it is important to subvert the common narrative told about trans* people through mainstream media and popular culture. *Visible Bodies* is about trans* voices telling trans* stories. Oftentimes, the common narrative contains images and stories that are oversimplified and stereotyped. Our goal is to show the diversity, complexity, and beauty of our community. This project is empowerment. We are making space for people to hear trans* voices and see trans* bodies. [*We use the umbrella term trans to include all people who identify outside the cisgender experience.]*" Sponsored by Hennepin Theatre Trust and Andersen Windows.

STAGE KISS
Through Aug. 30
Guthrie Theater Proscenium
818 S. 2nd St., Minneapolis
612-377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

Countless films and plays have reinforced the desperate impression that if only we had chosen "the one that got away" and had actually paired up with that one person, our lives would have taken a better path. That person would have been our soul mate, our passion, our fulfillment. Our ship came in and we missed it!



Stage Kiss. Photo by Joan Marcus



Made Here - Intersections: Visible Bodies: Transgender Narratives Retold - Twin Cities. Photo by Steven Lang

Playwright Sarah Ruhl challenges that old saw when an actress and an actor who had an intense relationship almost two decades before and have not seen each other since then, are cast as significant others in a play. While engaged in the artistic process of mounting a play, they think they are falling back in love. They try to recharge their old flames

but the audience may wonder if their original decision to go their separate ways was actually in their better interest. That said, the actress, simply known as She, has legitimate issues with her solid husband who is limited in his thinking and capacity for sensuality.

Stacia Rice and Todd Gearhart give colorfully hilarious lead performances in a rollicking, genuinely madcap production. There is a lovely kiss between Rice and a co-actress, Cat Brindisi, which is one of the few times a woman has kissed a woman on a Guthrie stage. Briskly, brightly, and snappily directed by Casey Stangl. We are reminded that our ship perhaps never actually did sail, or even if it did, so what? That was then. This is now. New ships are coming in all the time, if we would only just notice. And goodness knows, we are always changing and hopefully evolving. What was right for a person 20 years ago, may very well not be what's right for now. ■

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Wood Grilled Salmon with fennel, summer radishes, and parsley root.

Parella

“Oh look, someone else is moving into Figlio!” You’ve heard that before. In fact, it’s safe to say the only thing as memorable as the once-iconic eatery at the corner of Calhoun Square is the near-cursed inability of successors to maintain a foothold in what would seem an otherwise prime restaurant location.

Will this latest entrant into the fabled space last, you ask? For the first time in a while, the answer might just be yes. Especially if Chef Todd MacDonald has anything to say about it. And those who’ve eaten his food. Which I have. Lucky you.

Enter Parella. The self-described contemporary Italian eatery, named after a town in Piedmont, Italy, offers up rustic fare. Seafood and pasta are highlights, as is pretty much anything that comes out of the original woodfired oven.

I walked through the doors of Parella with friends for an early dinner one beautiful August afternoon, struck at once by how bright and open the space is. Its contemporary, modern decor is elegant without being stuffy. A theme, we soon came to learn, repeated far beyond just the decor.

We started our trip across the menu with the salmon crudo, gently cured, nestled atop smashed peas and pea tendrils. Sounds delicious,

right? It was. Bright and alive as most of the seafood was, including the white anchovies with charred long beans. The octopus with white beans was a personal favorite; tender, yet satisfying.

Moving along to a healthy selection of first course dishes, I began to see the method to Chef’s anything-butmadness. The green salad, for example, is not your typical green salad. Like so much of the menu, Chef takes the commonplace and turns it into something special. In this case, with the help of 20 greens and herbs, Sicilian pistachios, and Pecorino. And since the combination of greens will change with the seasons, your likelihood of having the same salad twice is nigh on impossible.

If there was a favorite among the first courses, the baked goat cheese with olive toast was it, hands down. As in, keep your hands down, away from the goat cheese, so I can have it all to myself. What more is there to say? Warm toasted goat cheese spread across crispy olive toasts. You want this.

Almost as bad as you’re going to want the pasta. There is bucatini and pappardelle, but my money is on the simple and heartily satisfying whole wheat spaghetti with anchovies and parsley pesto. Peppered with crispy garlic crumbs, this dish still calls my name. It’s the epitome of comfort



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food. As in, the next time I am sad, depressed, or otherwise fed up with the world I will seek out this dish. And it will hold me. Awkwardly and in public, yes, but I won't care. Moving along.

Onto second courses, and both the wood grilled salmon and brick-pressed half-chicken were table favorites. Tender and moist atop a bed of rich sunflower puree and wilted arugula, the chicken was particularly delightful. Again, as with so much we tasted, Chef surprised us with seemingly straightforward dishes. Making baked chicken memorable is not easy.

No matter how extensive your trip across the menu at Parella is, do yourself a favor and save room for dessert. Or don't, but you're still getting dessert. If you miss putting former Bachelor Farmer pastry chef Khanh Tran's delectable creations in your mouth, I pity you. The panna cotta, in particular, was a crowd pleaser. We literally fought over who got to finish the luscious layers of cream, grapes, lychee, and granita. Despite the fight, there were no losers. Everyone who got a taste was the better for it.

As was our entire table by the end of the meal. As would anyone be after paying Parella a visit.

Look, there are numerous places to eat in Uptown. Many of them mediocre at best. Bright, shiny objects offering up trendy dishes with little or no substance. Parella, on the other hand, has a soul. The soul of Chef Todd Macdonald and his entire team. And soul, after all, is exactly what this space needs to succeed. ■

PARELLA

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(Above) Chef Todd Macdonald; Wood Baked Goat Cheese with herbs, tomato fondue, and olive toast.
(Below) One of the many tucked-away places in Parella; Octopus 'Zuppa Freda' with white beans and pepper agrodolce.



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Duluth-Superior Pride Offers Marvelous Labor Day Weekend

By George Holdgrafer

This year, Duluth-Superior Pride marks its 29th anniversary with a four-day calendar of events in the Twin Ports of Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, over Labor Day Weekend, September 3-6. The catchy theme is "Qwe're Everywhere."

New events this year are Youth Pride on September 4, the X Party on September 4, and the Family Picnic on September 6.

Featured entertainment at the free Bayfront Pride Festival on September 6 in Duluth includes headliners

Sharon Needles and Her Band (6 p.m.), along with Trailer Park Queen (11 a.m.), Ballet (11:30 a.m.), American Rebels (11:45 a.m.), Superior Ballroom (12:15 p.m.), South of Superior (12:30 p.m.), Keynote Speaker Edward Moody (1:15 p.m.), Flaming Productions Dance Troupe (1:30 p.m.), Garek (2:15 p.m.), RuDeGirl (3 p.m.), The Keep Aways (4 p.m.), and Big Wave Dave and the Ripples (5 p.m.). Also at the festival is the DS Pride Historical Collection.

Following the festival, both GLBT bars in Superior, The Flame Nightclub and The Main Club,

just a few blocks apart, cohost the Pride Block Party in the evening at their respective venues, with a free shuttle running between them.

Looking for a reasonable and fun place to stay on Friday and Saturday, September 3 and 4? Try the venerable Duluth Sauna in Downtown Duluth, with special overnight Pride hours from noon each day to 9 a.m. the next day. See accompanying article in this issue.

For more information, visit www.dspride.com. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, September 3

MAYOR'S RECEPTION & WEEKEND OPENING

5 p.m.
The Depot
506 W. Michigan St., Duluth

ST. LOUIS COUNTY HERITAGE & ARTS CENTER

Artist Reception
506 W. Michigan St., Duluth

Friday, September 4

YOUTH PRIDE AT THE CLYDE

8-11 p.m.
Clyde Iron Works
2920 W. Michigan St., Duluth
218-227-1150

X PARTY 2015

The Flame Nightclub
28 N. 1st Ave. W., Duluth
218-727-2344

POETRY READING

To Be Announced
Check www.dspride.com

Saturday, September 5

HUMMINGBIRD FAMILY

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
5K FUN RUN/WALK
Registration 9 a.m.
Starts 10 a.m.
Western Lake Superior Waterfront Trail
7408 Grand Ave., Duluth

BAYFRONT PRIDE FESTIVAL (Free)

11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Bayfront Festival Park
Lake Superior, Duluth

PRIDE BLOCK PARTY

8 p.m.
Cohosted By
The Flame Nightclub
1612 Tower Ave., Superior
The Main Club
1217 Tower Ave., Superior



Sunday, September 6

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Boarding 3:30 p.m.
Departs 3:45 p.m.
Vista Fleet
323 Harbor Dr., Duluth

PRIDE DRAG SHOW

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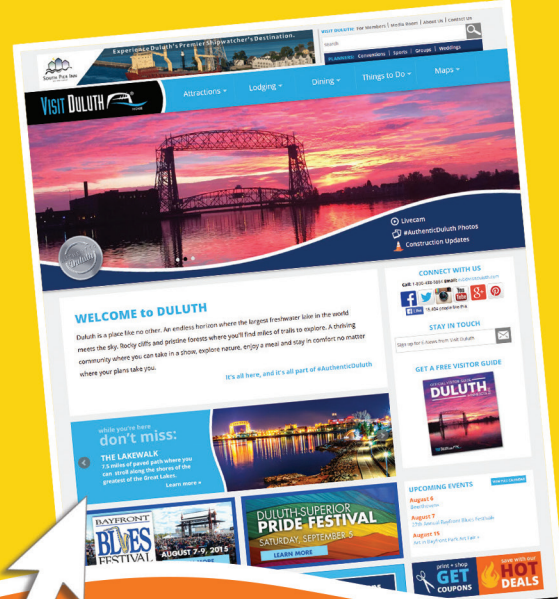
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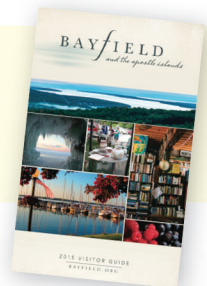


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Minnesota: KEEPING IT LOCAL WITH

Fall Getaways

By Aaron Berdofe, Minnesota Wine Educator/Writer

Minnesota may be known across the nation for its biting cold winters and its craft beer scene, but one thing it isn't known for yet are wine trails. Recent advancements in wine making and grape growing practices in addition to a handful of new grape varieties that can survive the northern winters from the University of Minnesota are changing that notion though. There are now around 70 licensed wineries in the state of Minnesota and new ones opening every year, meaning that there are way too many to visit in a single weekend. However, this fall may be a great time to start whittling — or sipping — down the list.

Regular visitors of wine country will know that every region has its own unique blend of grape varieties and style that create a fingerprint for that area. In Minnesota and the surrounding states there are four grape varieties that are emerging to create defining wines: Marquette, La Crescent, Frontenac, and Frontenac gris. Marquette, a red grape is a grandchild of the often lauded pinot noir with a similar taste and feel. The wines made from Marquette are full of vibrant red and dark fruits with a thin line of green over the top that do nicely with a touch of oak. La Crescent, a white grape is reminiscent of a muscat in its highly aromatic nose, but carries with it a fuller body much like a viognier. Frontenac, is another red grape that is wonderfully versatile creating either light bodied red wines, delightful summer rosés, or even fortified port-style wines. Frontenac gris grapes create a lighter bodied white wine which can be delightfully crisp with a more understated nose making it a great alternative for the pinot grigio drinker. Unlike typical past Midwestern wine, these wines are generally being made in a drier style making them ideal for food pairing.

A comprehensive list of Minnesota and surrounding area wineries can be found on the Minnesota Grape Growers Association (MGGA) website: www.mngrapes.org. Additionally, the non-profit organization also sells a winery passport for \$25 which gives the holder 10 free tastings at any of the 38 participating wineries which are open for tours, tastings, and events. A tasting generally costs between \$5 and \$10 at a winery so the passport pays for itself pretty quickly and most wineries also give special deals or activities to passport holders, making it a must-have for a fall wine trail tour, bachelor/bachelorette party, or bike tour. The passports are for sale through the MGGA website or at a participating winery providing that they have some in stock. However, for the weekend escapade, 35 wineries across the state and into bordering ones may be a bit much to take in. Fortunately, there are some wine trails that are more geographically focused.

The Great River Road Wine Trail (www.greatriverroadwinetrail.org) rolls down the mighty Mississippi with 11 wineries in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The wine trail gets its namesake from the designated scenic highways that it is located off of, so not only is their plenty of good wine to sample, but the drive will also be astoundingly beautiful with the autumn colors. Passport wineries that can be found on this trail: Cannon River Winery, Falconer Vineyards, Flower Valley Vineyard, Villa Bellezza Winery, Danzinger Vineyards, Elmaro Vineyard, and Garvin Heights Vineyard.

Just north is the Upper St. Croix Wine Trail (www.upperstcroixwinetrail.com) winding its way around a smaller, but no less beautiful, river. The wine trail



taways



includes five wineries in both Minnesota and Wisconsin and wine tasters can mix in a hike around Taylors Falls. As with the other wine trails in the state, this tour is self-guided, but Lee's Limousine (www.leeslimo.com) is a regular charioting service recommended by this wine trail. Passport wineries that can be found on this trail: Chateau St. Croix Winery and Vineyard, Dancing Dragonfly Winery, North Folk Winery, and Wild Mountain Winery.

Wineries and vineyards are also clustering around certain towns in addition to being found in river valleys. In Waconia, three vineyards can be located within bicycling distance of each other: Parley Lake Winery, Sovereign Estate Wine, and Schram Vineyards. In addition to having quality wines, lake views, orchard views, and lawn games, these wineries are down the street from the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and Horticultural Research Center where Marquette, La Crescent, Frontenac, and Frontenac gris were all developed. The Landscape Arboretum (www.arboretum.umn.edu) is open to the general public who are interested in getting as close to the source of Minnesota wine as possible. To boot, Waconia is only minutes away from the southwestern suburbs of Minneapolis.

Mankato is another hub with three wineries clustering around its northeastern edge: Chankaska Creek Ranch and Winery, Next Chapter Winery, and Indian Island Winery. Visitors to these wineries can enjoy live music or perhaps learn how to paint while they decide which wines are their favorite.

The number of wine tasting opportunities in the state and the immediately surrounding areas is growing significantly and visitors will not only taste the increasing maturity in the wines, but also see the rapidly expanding vineyards attached to a number of wineries. This past winter and growing season has been wonderful and will turn out one of the highest volumes of grapes that the state has seen. Yet visitors will probably note the number of new vine plantings that aren't ready for production in this current season. Anyone that goes out tasting Minnesota wines this fall will be in for a treat as they taste the wines from grapes that are now being planted in not only the Midwest, but Vermont, New York, and Canada. Fall may signal the end of the growing season and warmer weather, but it may just prove to be the start of a new Minnesota tradition. ■

(Clockwise) **Frontenac gris grapes.** Photo courtesy of The University of Minnesota; **Fall colors at 7 Vines Vineyard in Dellwood;** **Private dining area of Chateau St. Croix;** **Next Chapter Winery pouring wine at this past year's Summer Wine Festival & Market.** Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Grape Growers Association



The Best City You Never Heard Of

By Carla Waldemar

I'm visiting the City of Design (touts UNESCO). The City of Culinary Delights (so say foodies). The Green Heart of Austria (proclaim locals). It's the second-largest city in the land. It's Graz. Who knew? But now the secret's out.

While tourists flock to the Habsburgs' stately Vienna and Salzburg's *Sound of Music*, Graz lies under the radar (but not for long): a quasi-Mediterranean city with a whiff of Italy. A Tintoretto altarpiece is framed by the Italianate Baroque curls that inhabit its ornate edifices, and a sense of *vivace* fills the open-air market, though it's the oil of local pumpkinseeds, not olives, they're selling. The ornate Opera House it faces would feel at home across the border.

I'm staying in the Hotel zum Dom ("Oh, it's famous!" gasped my taxi driver, winning me a notch of respect). This former palatial mansion stands list a missal's throw from the Dom itself, the ebullient Cathedral of 1438. Supporting that City of Design accolade, there's a crimson velvet settee aside my four-poster bed, with plush drapes to match. Oh, and culinary delights? In the sunny breakfast room, the deli spread rivals Dean & DeLuca's, plus all the cappuccino I can swallow.

Fortified, I head to the Dom, famed for its admonitory fresco, "The Plagues of God": beware, or He'll send locusts. And Turks. A few blocks farther, the Stadtpfarrkirche of 1439 displays that glorious Tintoretto. An equally brilliant modern stained glass window depicts Christ, mocked by unbelievers, including Hitler and Mussolini. Here and there around town, you'll spy the tag of a past Emperor bragging, A-E-I-O-U (Austria Est Imperator of the Universe).

His castle is gone, however. But, where it once stood crowning Castle Hill, a clock tower remains. (Napoleon destroyed the rest, but was paid off to spare the town's symbol.) Ascend to this pinnacle via countless (I stopped after 200) steps, built by Russian POWs, for a spectacular view of the red-tiled roofs below; or ascend via elevator within the mountain's tunnel-cum-performance space.

Peering down, across the tumbling river, you'll spot what appears to be a beached blue glass whale. It's actually the beloved Friendly Alien, as townsfolk call their modern-art museum of 2003. Behind it, a once-dodgy neighborhood now harbors hipster shops (gotta-have jewelry, designer specs, artisan pottery, handbags of recycled webbing, and the rubber shoes I didn't know I needed).

Crossing the river's pedestrian bridge, which slices through a man-made mini-island sporting a trendy café, you'll hit stylish Sackstrasse, an avenue anchored by K&O, Austria's largest department store. Ride the escalator to floor six and its open-air café for a selfie overlooking those terra cotta rooftops. Back on the street looms the city's most-visited attraction, the Landeszeughaus Armory (OK, it's a guy thing), showcasing four floors of old-time weapons: swords, lances, muskets, pistols, helmets. "The bad news," smirks my guide, "No knights' armor. The good news," he allows: "The largest collection in the world" — sort of the Goodwill Outlet — of outdated armor.

Near it, the museum of city history explains how Graz is different from rivals Salzburg and Vienna. Farther afield, the Joanneum Quarter sequesters a cache of underground collections below its concrete plaza. I favor the Neue Museum with its arresting meander through Austria's recent art history, from Impressionism to Realism and the post-war Avant Garde.

By now, I'm salivating to pursue those culinary delights, and a grand place





(Opposite page) **Glockenspiel Clock in Graz.**
 (Top to Bottom) **Kunsthau Graz, or Graz Art Museum**, was built as part of the European Capital of Culture celebrations in 2003 and has since become an architectural landmark in Graz, Austria. © Graz Tourismus - Harry Schiffer; **Castle Riegersburg in the rain;** **Dachlandschaft Schlossberg.** © Graz Tourismus - Harry Schiffer

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FALL GETAWAYS

to start is Glockenspiel Square. First direct your eyes to the clock tower where, three times daily, a door opens and a figure of a farmer in lederhosen, hoisting a stein, dances around a dirndl'd lass forever waving her hankie. After a click of the camera, aim for the door of Glockenbräu below, a brewery-cum-eatery celebrating Styrian comfort food like krauslerl (cabbage and bacon tossed with pasta snippets) and its famed breaded-chicken salad, delivered by a weight-lift champ with four arm-long steins of beer in one fist, two platters in the other. By the time everybody clinks a "Prost!" it's time for another round.

Cozy Altsteirische Schmankerlstube, near the armory, has been in business forever, enticing regulars with creamy garlic soup, roast pork with kraut and dumplings, wiener schnitzel — and, for dessert, pumpkinseed ice parfait. Eckstein, near my hotel, grafts modern touches to grandma's classics: duck reimaged with oyster mushrooms, okra, and smoked peppers; "crunchy leg" of suckling pig and cabbage, spritzed with port wine and Champagne.

Inspired by a flute of the region's sparkling wine, at Gasthaus Steinzenbauer — a supermodel of gemulichkeit — we devoured an ample appetizer plate saluting Styrian beef in aspic; Styrian carpaccio with Austrian Parmesan; smoked local trout; and sheep cheese wrapped in bacon. Then, trout with asparagus risotto and the kitchen's specialty, Styrian liver. Culinary delights to the max!

To get to the source, head for "the Green Heart of Austria" — the Thermenland countryside, emerald with forests, orchards and lilac blooms, past Maypoles trailing silky ribbons. An hour along winding roads, we find cars parked here, there, everywhere, and in a minute, the reason is clear: Zotter chocolate factory beckons. Indulge your inner Charlie on a multi-taste tour, sampling by countries of origin, percent of cacao, and degrees of roasting at over 100 tasting stations, including a hot chocolate bar. I'm but one of 260,000 annual visitors, ambling through its Edible Zoo, teaching kids where food comes from; past the Cemetery of Bad Ideas, starring chocolate flavor-flops like peanut butter/catsup. Other offbeat flavors still going strong: ham; fish with coconut; mango lassi. In the café we "Prost!" with flutes of the farm's cider.

Then on to Castle Riegersburg, perched on a volcanic mountaintop — a never-conquered 12th-century fortress whose moat, today, is filled with grazing pigs. It houses three museums: weaponry; the ornate medieval rooms of its wealthy owner; and an expo of 16th-century witches, including one suspect lady who caused roses to bloom in winter. There's a map, like a TV weather report, with arrows showing their flight paths (duck and cover).

Our escapade ends at Weingut Krispel, sipping the winery's fruity rieslings and crisp sauvignon blancs at its May Day party, seduced by oompah bands and mountains of homey eats. Meet you there next May Day? Check out www.visitgraz.com to make it come true. ■



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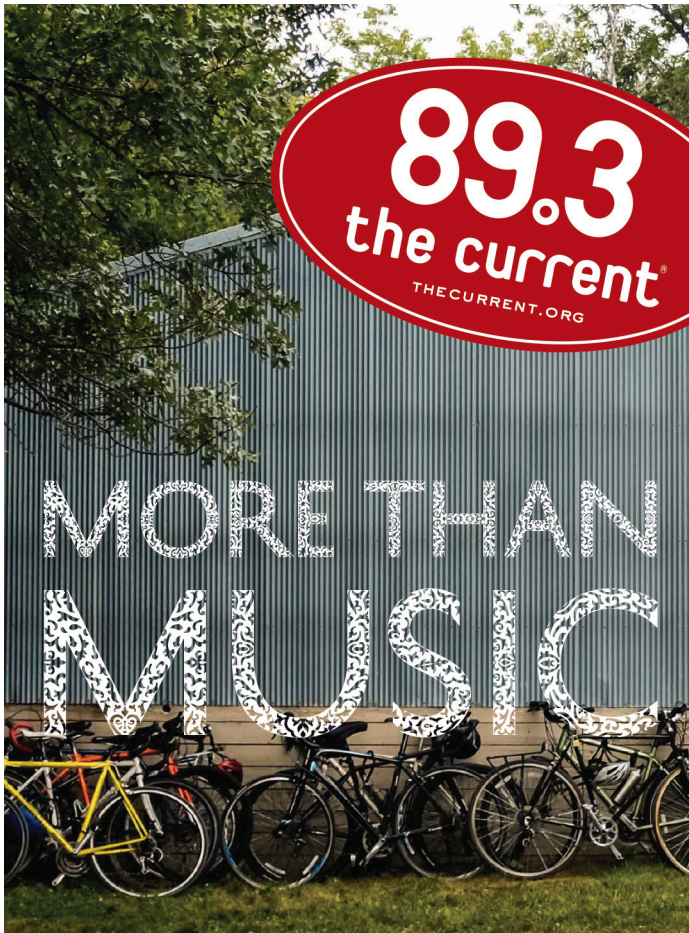
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A portrait of a smiling man with glasses, wearing a maroon sweater, identified as Jason Matheson.

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A portrait of a smiling man with grey hair, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, identified as Jerry A. Burg.

Finnish-ed Yet?

By Carla Waldemar

As a fan of the Minnesota Orchestra, I wear my I Heart Osmo button proudly. And now, after a visit to the music director's beloved homeland, I Heart Finland, too. And I Heart Sibelius, the land's fanatically revered composer, after tracing his roots in the year of his 150th birthday. He lived his life for music, fuelled by two other loves: for his emerging nation (Finland was ruled first by Sweden, then Russia, until independence in 1917) and its extravagant natural beauty.

Touring the countryside (Finland is 60 percent forest), it's clear why, when emigrating, Finns chose Minnesota. Same landscape: birch, pine, lake; birch, pine, lake. Friendly? Sure. But few braggarts here. Modesty prevails. (Joke: When a Finn talks to you, he looks at his shoes. An extrovert? He looks at your shoes.) At Michelin-starred restaurants, patrons arrive in jeans. And in the sauna, naked. Proof of madness: after poaching themselves in that wooden box, they plunge into a frigid lake (yes, I leapt in, too).

Finns have won world championships, from hockey to wife-carrying and phone-throwing, but it didn't go to their heads; it's all about nature, not notoriety. For Sibelius, whose wife raised and home-schooled six kids without running water (too noisy for the composer's sensibilities), it was the birch-pine-lake of Aulanko Park that inspired his iconic "Finlandia." I'm humming it as we tramp through the forest.

Then off to his nearby birthplace, Hämeenlinna, to tour the home where his widowed mama raised him to be a lawyer (sorry!), starring his piano — later transported via rowboat on his honeymoon; the park bearing his statue; the Sibelius Center with mementoes (CDs to paper dolls); and the Gingerbread House for a Sibelius menu (salmon!).

Circling Lake Tuusula by bike, we brake for the Järvenpää Art Museum's exhibit dedicated to Aino, the Renaissance woman he married: Aino's own music, a novel she wrote, handicrafts she executed, the garden she adored, the sauna she designed. Pedal on to the town's Knitting Café for a cuppa and conversation with the locals and



shopping ops, like the knitware that multi-talented Aino designed. Back on bikes to Ainola, the couple's lifetime forest home, and gravesite. (Today it's also base for a festival helmed by young maverick Pekka Kuusisto, returning to Minnesota with his violin next season.) We tour the self-designed 1902 home/studio of their nature-painting neighbor, Pekka Halonen, then celebrate a Sibelius menu (homemade sausages, herring, and cabbage casserole in starring roles) at the dairy barn-turned-homey-hotel, Krapu Estates, after a torrid smoke sauna followed by an icy plunge.

Then off to Helsinki, hemmed by 200 islands bobbing in the Baltic — another Sibelius haunt. At the luxe Hotel Kämp, in the lounge where he imbibed and puffed cigars for a week at a time (poor Aino), we meet the composer's granddaughter, Aino Porra, herself a musician with the National Opera. For her, he was simply a playful grandpa. "I didn't understand he was special. Most important: the love of nature I learned from him."

We learn more of Sibelius, "the man behind the music," at an anniversary exhibition in City Hall. We visit his memorial, a (controversial) cluster of steel pipes. We lunch, as he did, at see-and-be-seen Kappeli, anchoring the convivial, park-like Esplanadi Boulevard (where, at a bandstand, a group is singing "That's Amore" in Finnish).

Oh, the Esplanadi! Here stand the flagship shops of Finnish design: Marimekko fabrics, Iitaala crystal, architect Alvar Aalto's contempo furniture, Artek. Venture off the avenue to discover the cache of indie boutiques that constitute the Design District, lush with bold, bright, and whimsical interpretations. Helsinki's Design Museum celebrates this sensibility via collections of ordinary household objects (Fiskars scissors, Nokia phones), decade by decade. Upstairs, amble through the Golden Age of Fashion ('60s to '80s), when Jackie Kennedy "discovered" Marimekko dresses and purchased nine.

Meanwhile, crane your neck for fashion of another sort — the Art Nouveau buildings of the early 1900s (called Romantic Style by Finns), flaunting curvy balconies and motifs from nature — here a bear, there a pinecone. Then along came the country's star-chitects, Alvar Aalto (Finlandia Hall) and Eliel Saarinen (Helsinki's magnificent train station, plus the St. Louis Arch, Des Moines Art Museum,



(Opposite page) **Finnish National Museum, Helsinki.**
(Clockwise) **Finland Sibelius Monument, Helsinki;**
Jean Sibelius's Home, Ainola; Central Railway Station,
Helsinki. Photos courtesy of Visit Helsinki.



and our own Christ Church Lutheran). Saarinen also designed the castle-like National Museum, livening Finnish history from the Stone Age through Viking times and foreign rule (gawk at the gold-and-velvet throne) — from church art (carvings of St. Olaf, St. Knut) to homespun objects of Forest Finns (birchbark knapsacks, gaily painted horse collars, and ironing boards). The story climaxes at Kiasma Contemporary Museum with its show of Map-plethorpe photography.

Now to the most ecstatic art form — food. Does Helsinki represent dining nirvana? “Hel Yeah,” according to an ad campaign, which delivers on its promise. New Nordic cuisine is flourishing, and without the impossible price tags and waits for a table like the Copenhagen guys who think they own the label. It’s the endearing mantra of local/seasonal: traditional fare but embellished as Granny never imagined. Olo earned its Michelin star with menus starring translucent carrot slices with sorrel granite and housemade feta; cabbage wrapping pork and barley afloat in chicken broth; pike sided with new potatoes, cucumbers and pea puree; then Apple Jack ice cream paired with gooseberry mousse and spruce shoots. Hel, Yeah!

Spis, tiny as a closet, was awarded Restaurant of the Year for its forward prix-fixe menu: amuses of turnip, malt and kohlrabi, tinier than a fingernail, and a tiny Finnish churro with garlic and potato mayo. Next, red cabbage paired with cabbage-as-kraut under a drizzle of mustard; cukes with cottage cheese and garlic mustard sprouts in cucumber foam; carrots three ways: fermented, sweet/sour crumbles, and puree. Then a warm dish: salmon with carrot and parsley root aside a pesto-potato salad; an intermezzo sorbet of spruce tips and pollen; followed by chicken atop wheat-tarragon risotto and

pickled hempseed. Finally, rhubarb!

Nokka, housed in a former seaside warehouse, starts its prix-fixe with asparagus aside mushrooms and spruce sprouts, followed by air-dried Finnish beef with goat cheese, black currant sauce and bits of beet. Fish comes dressed with nettles and smoked perch roe, preceding a birch sorbet with elderberry flower granite, and finally, carrot parfait with white chocolate mousse and herbal granite.

At Juuri, sapa — Finnish tapas — are the way to eat. After an amuse of spring onion soup, I chose asparagus pudding topped with creamy gouda, then cabbage stuffed with barley in a smoked mustard dressing; finally, goose — both liver pâté and sausage in raspberry and sunflower-seed sauce. Dessert? Again, rhubarb!

But Old Nordic hasn’t been discarded, simply refined. At KuuKuu (a recent Helsinki Menu winner), I feasted on creamy salmon soup, followed by meatballs with mashed potatoes and lingonberry sauce. Café Ekberg, looking like nothing has changed since the ‘20s, delivered a warm salmon sandwich topped with fried egg, cucumbers, and lots of dill — popular with blue-hairs, sure, and delivered by a pert waitress with half-shaven scalp and blue curls. And don’t forget about breakfast: hotel buffets that just don’t quit (herring at 9 a.m. is easy to get used to).

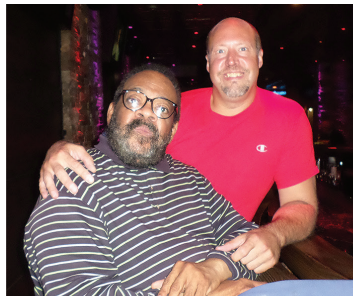
My room in hipster-central Scandic Paasi boasted red heart pillows and a punching bag (just in case things don’t work out?). It anchors the gayborhood called Kallio and its informal boys’ club, Bear Park. Finnair has just introduced a direct flight from Chicago, so what’s stopping you? For information, see www.visitfinland.com. ■

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Duluth Family Sauna Provides Unique, Fun Experience

I first visited the historic Duluth Family Sauna, on the same block as the Fond-du-Luth Casino in Downtown Duluth, Minnesota, in 2003, and since then, it has been my favorite GLBT venue. Built in 1923, it's unique in Minnesota and the nearby area, as you'd have to visit Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Denver, Seattle, or Winnipeg to find something similar. The Duluth Family Sauna is one of the most fun, safe places you'll ever experience, with a friendly staff and clientele.

Herb Jensen bought the Duluth Family Sauna in 1969 and operated it well, until his death in 2013. Carrying on his legacy, his wife Kate and daughter Denise are committed to continue to serve the establishment's many customers in the future. Staff persons Mark, Jon, and Tom are on duty.

The two-level Duluth Family Sauna offers many amenities. Its central feature is the authentic Finnish sauna downstairs, in which water cascades over a heated radiator, filling the room with steam that has a wonderfully regenerative effect on one's body. A number of private rooms and two lounges with TVs are available for relaxation.

Patrons from a wide area visit the Duluth Family Sauna and return often. I've encountered people from Duluth-Superior, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Iowa, and Michigan. It's a quite welcoming crowd. The name of the place says it well, as both staff and customers are family. Herb Jensen used to put it this way: "You'll meet the nicest people here." My own experience certainly proves his point, as I've made many lifelong friends there.

The Duluth Family Sauna is open daily, from noon to 10 p.m., except for New Year's Day, Easter, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. An especially popular feature — and my favorite — is the weekly Saturday overnight, during which you can enjoy a good time from 9 a.m. Saturday to 9 a.m. Sunday at the most reasonable price you'll pay for lodging anywhere.

Don't miss a great place to stay and party for Duluth-Superior Pride, as the Duluth Family Sauna is open overnight on both September 4 and 5 from 9 a.m. to the following 9 a.m. I'll be there for sure. ■

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TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN AS THEY ADJUST FROM SUMMER TO SCHOOL



As families transition from the summer to a new school year, children, parents, and other caregivers may be feeling anxiety, stress, or excitement, or any combination of feelings. Different family members may have different feelings, and these feelings may even change day to day. Having time to connect is an important part of daily routines, even when parents bump up against short answers from their children or feel limited by a lack of time and energy at the end of a full day.

Think about the times you remember from your childhood. We often hold closest to our hearts the moments of being seen, understood, and enjoyed. Even when we don't remember what happened, these interactions have a deep and lasting impact. Communication is a key part of building this connection with your child.

Whether you are communicating with a kindergartener or a freshman in high school, positive communication is vital to enhancing self-esteem, social skills, problem-solving skills, and self-regulation. Without even knowing it, caregivers are teaching children how to repair relationships, handle frustrations, and connect with others. By getting your children used to talking about their life early on and making it a part of your normal routine, it will reduce their defensiveness when they are older or when they experience challenges.

As children develop and evolve, so does their communication style. What may have worked in the past for one child or for other children, may not work now. It can be helpful to have a big toolbox to pull from when you aren't sure what to do next. The following tips can help caregivers positively communicate with their children:

- **Make sure your child is getting enough sleep, is well-fed, and is physically comfortable. This will impact their mood and therefore their interactions with you.**
- **Establish a check-in routine and let it change as your child changes. It could be thumbs up, thumbs down (with a further description), or sharing the best and most challenging parts of their day over the dinner table. When you both share during this activity, you are helping your child practice listening as well.**
- **Explore what they are doing in class, experiencing in friendships, and learning about current events from news, social media, and peers.**
- **Teens are figuring out who they are and who they are separate from you. They experience changes and pressure, which can make them moody and difficult by nature. Let them have different opinions, interests, and ideas. Remember they still love you even when they disagree or get frustrated.**
- **Brainstorm together something you both enjoy that you can do together. This can be something you've already done or something you've both wanted to try.**
- **Let your child teach you something or create something with you.**
- **Be creative with asking more than yes/no questions. Try "I've been thinking about you. Tell me about..." or "I've been wondering how you feel/think about..." or "What did/didn't you like about..."**
- **Listen with curiosity, and ask questions to show interest to help your children feel valued and heard.**
- **Show your children they have your attention. Put away your phone or other gadget. Sit down by them or get down to their level.**
- **Use humor and laugh together. This is great for our health and feeling connected.**
- **Spend five distraction-free minutes with your child during your first contact after school.**
- **If your child needs a break after school, let them breathe and relax and find the five distraction-free minutes later.**
- **Be spontaneous and look for open moments to talk: in the car, preparing dinner, standing in line, on a walk, or getting ready for bed.**
- **Time in the car can be a great time to connect because family members do not have to make direct eye contact and tend to be more open.**
- **Try sitting by each other or doing an activity side-by-side to take the pressure off talking. Sometimes communicating is nonverbal.**
- **When you are talking, use your body language and facial expressions to show you are actively listening and interested in what they are saying.**
- **Repeat what they say to show you are listening and to check in on what you are hearing. "It seems like you are sad about.... Tell me more about it."**



- Validate what they are sharing. "I understand why you feel that way."
- Help your child find their own solutions by asking them what's helped in the past, what they would like to do, or what kind of help they want from you. Feel free to share ideas, knowing they will pick the one that works for them and you don't have to be the one to solve the problem.
- Resist the first urges to give advice or make something into a teaching moment. Keep listening. You will be able to help your child after they feel like you heard them. If you sense resistance, ask what you missed and what they need from you.
- Avoid lecturing, criticizing and/or yelling. Wait until both of you are calm so your child can hear the advice you are sharing or the lesson you want them to learn.
- Let your child signal when they don't want to talk or need a break. Tell them that's okay and you would like to connect later. You will be teaching them how to set up boundaries and how to regulate their emotions.
- Show your children that you take delight in who they are and the time you spend together. It doesn't have to be every interaction but make space for this to happen.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 ➔

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CHILDREN & FAMILY

As you communicate with your child, if you notice a bad day turns into many bad days, keep exploring what your child is experiencing. Whether a child is starting a new school or just experiencing common fears about a new grade level, caregivers may notice a change in a child's behavior or temperament as school begins. Worries and sadness can manifest in physical symptoms, and a child may complain of headaches, stomach aches, or inability to sleep. It's important to help children work through these feelings because it can easily have implications on their ability to learn in the classroom. Children's mental health is foundational to their ability to experience academic and social success in school.

If you have ongoing concerns about your child's social, emotional or behavioral development, talk with your child's teachers, school counselors, or doctor. It can be hard for caregivers to know when to seek outside help with their child's anxiety, sadness, irritability, or concerning behaviors. A helpful rule of thumb is that if your child has been experiencing physical, mental, and/or emotional signs of anxiety or sadness, more days than not for at least a few weeks, this is likely impacting your child's school performance, relationships with others, and sense of self. An assessment by a therapist experienced in working with children and adolescents will help you better understand what your child is experiencing and how to help him/her develop strategies for managing their feelings. ■

NOTE: The information provided should not be used during a mental health emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of a mental health condition. A licensed mental health professional should be consulted for a diagnosis and treatment. Call 911 for mental health emergencies.

Jessica Anderson, LICSW, has worked with children and families for more than 10 years and is currently a therapist at Washburn Center for Children, a leading children's mental health center in Minnesota. www.washburn.org

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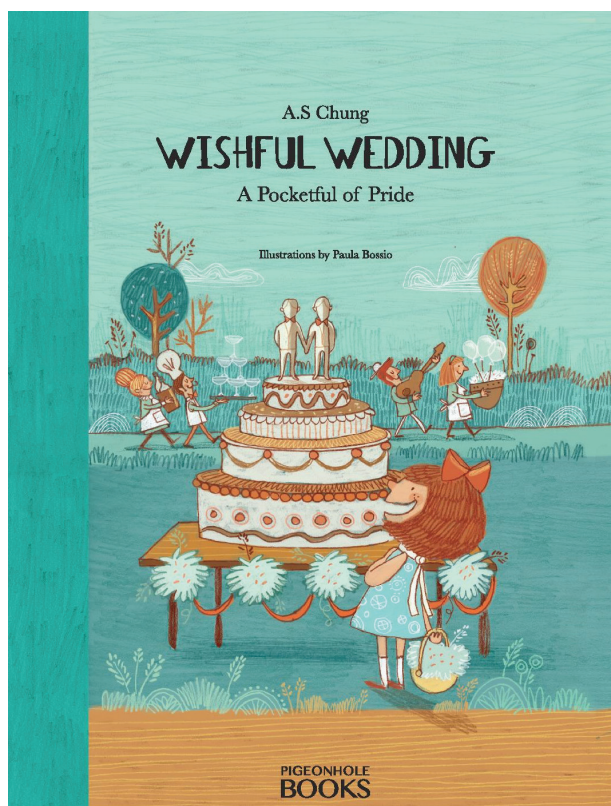
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Books & Movies

RAINBOW RESOURCES



Wishful Wedding

Australian author A.S. Chung's new children's book delves into the topic of marriage equality for same-gender families. Told through the eyes of a small child from a same-sex family, the book is aimed toward children aged 3–6 years. The rhyming text and colorful illustrations work together to share a little girl's mixed emotions about her aunt's wedding. Although she is happy for her aunt and excited to serve as her flower girl, she wishes her two fathers could declare their love at their own ceremony.

"LGBT equality has always been very much part of my beliefs and I am often frustrated when I am confronted by exasperating homophobic news," Chung says. "My agenda, however, is geared toward children of same gender families and how difficult that must be growing up in a society and community where it is not often understood and sometimes still considered a stigma. It is unjust, especially when they have parents who have made a conscious decision to raise a child in a loving family environment."

A recent divorce prompted the writing chapter of Chung's life, who started writing to show her then-four-year-old daughter that they could face this life challenge together and did so through loving words and beautiful illustrations.

"Stories with a message for children from same-gender families just became a natural extension of my writing," Chung says. "I felt the issues of marriage equality needed to be highlighted in a gentle manner whilst also reminding the generations to come that this was once upon a time an incredulous issue we had to face. More importantly, I believe that we need more LGBTQ literature for younger children so they know no different and that they will grow up in a world where diverse family units just simply exist. I long for the day when we don't have to associate pride with the words 'tolerance' and 'acceptance.' We need more exposure and education in our schools, libraries, and media."

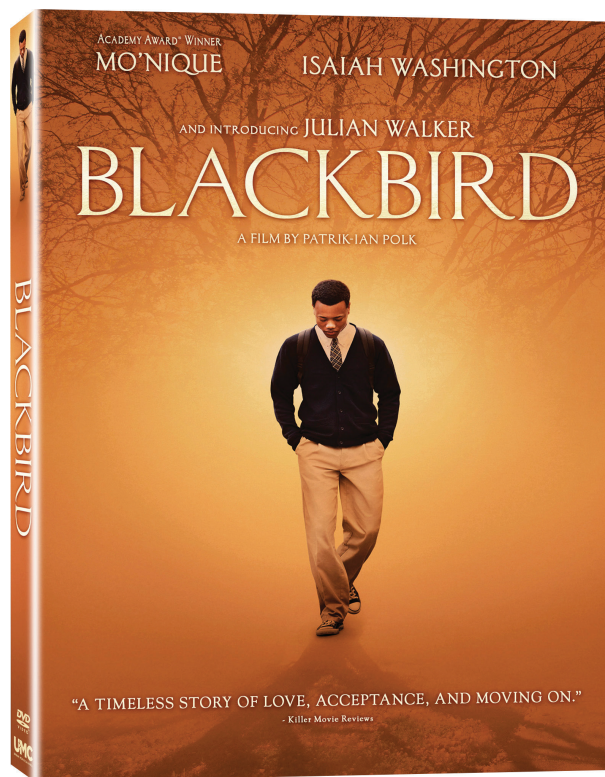
Although the Supreme Court's recent ruling in support of marriage equality has made same-sex marriage a reality throughout the United States, Chung argues that

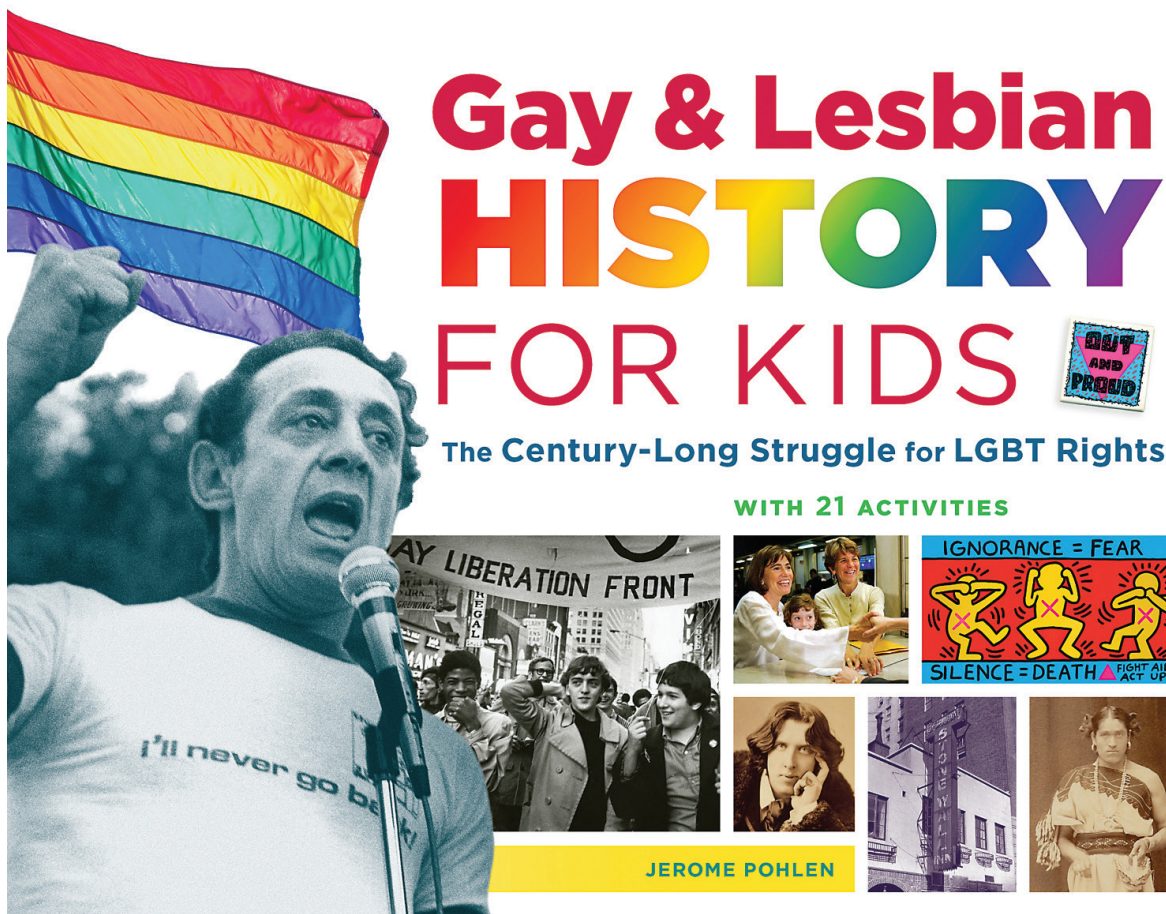
this story prompts discussions of the fight for marriage across the globe.

Blackbird

The independent, award-winning, film *Blackbird* tells the story of seventeen-year-old Randy (newcomer Julian Walker), a devout Christian who is hiding a secret inner struggle: the denial of being gay. Since his father (Isaiah Washington) left, Randy takes care of his emotionally disturbed mother (Mo'Nique) and is the kind of friend all of his classmates can depend on. It is not until he opens himself up to love that he discovers that becoming a man means accepting who you really are.

Based on the novel of the same title by Larry Duplechan, the film, which released in theaters in April, is directed by Patrikian Polk who many might recognize from his work with Logo Network's *Noah's Arc*. Creating an emotional roller coaster ride for viewers, this incredibly talented cast portrays the difficult journey into acceptance and love. Viewers will also be pleasantly surprised by Isaiah Washington's portrayal of the young gay man's father in





light of Washington's dramatic exit from the *Grey's Anatomy* cast following allegations of homophobic slurs.

The Blu-ray and DVD includes never-before-seen special features, including deleted scenes, audition footage, a behind-the-scenes featurette, and special music video by cast member D. Woods. The transparency of this film sheds light on the struggle of a young man's journey to self-confidence and finding his place in this world.

Read more online in "*Blackbird: The Film of Love and Acceptance that Almost Wasn't Made*" on www.LavenderMagazine.com.

Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights, with 21 Activities

As long as there has been civilization, GLBT people have played a part — from farmers to poets, generals to foot soldiers, peasants to queens and kings. Given today's news headlines involving marriage equality and gender transitioning, it would be easy for children to assume that the campaign

for GLBT equality is a 21st-century development rather than the final act in a struggle that started long ago.

Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights by Jerome Pohlen helps young readers understand the rich history of GLBT people and put more recent events into context. Considering the newness of national marriage equality, a book like this feels perfectly timed for release. After providing a brief history up to 1900, each following chapter in the book discusses an era in the struggle for GLBT civil rights from the 1920s to today. It uses personal stories, photos, and firsthand accounts of key events, like the 1950s "Lavender Scare," the Stonewall Inn uprising, and the AIDS crisis, to create historical significance for GLBT people in an approachable, kid-friendly format. Readers will learn how many famous historical members of the community kept their sexual orientation a secret in order to avoid persecution; and they may be pleasantly surprised to discover just how many accomplished figures throughout history (Leonardo Da Vinci, Jane Addams, Maurice Sendak) were also gay.

The book's 21 activities help to enliven the history. Kids can write a free-verse poem like Walt Whitman, learn the Madison line dance, design a quilt panel, and write a song parody to learn about the spirited ways in which the GLBT community has pushed for positive social change. It's an interesting and eye-opening book for all young readers, and a long overdue addition to the history shelves. ■

What Do We Do When Love Doesn't Win?

I'm trying to absorb all that's happened since June.

First, the Supreme Court declared same-sex marriage the law of the land. I read the responses of my GLBT family with joy. I also read with great sadness the responses of religious denominations and politicians seeking the evangelical vote.

Second, I watched a documentary about Larry Kramer. It took me back to the kitchen table where I first heard the word "AIDS" in the 1980s. People like me were dying. I didn't understand why. Our pastor in parochial school said those people (my people) were "receiving in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." Romans 1 said so, according to him.

Finally, I learned about "Religious Trauma Syndrome." That's a name being given to common symptoms people display who leave an authoritarian religious body. These are religions that indoctrinate people to be afraid of a god and afraid of "the world" outside the religious body.

In pondering all this, I am shocked at how far society has come in my lifetime in recognizing the natural rights of GLBT people. I'm amazed at how far I've come in loving myself.

My celebration however is quickly tempered by another realization.

Our society does not recognize and protect the natural rights of GLBT human beings *at the urging* of most religious institutions. Our society has made this progress *despite* most religious bodies, *despite* the venom spewed by mainly religious people, *contrary* to "deeply held religious beliefs" of my former co-religionists. Humanity is on the brink of a cure for HIV/AIDS *despite* the smug glee of some religious people that we were, and still are, dying. Among gay African American youth, bisexual men, and transgender women, the rates of HIV infection have never been higher.

Are there exceptions to this progress our society has made in recognizing us as human beings, against the dictates of religious authorities? Definitely. There are believers of every stripe numbered among our greatest allies. They take their morals very literally as they seek to love us GLBT people as their neighbor, and as themselves.

But our religious allies are our allies *despite* what their religious authorities teach them, *in most cases*. They have rejected their indoctrination in this matter. Why? Because they now actually know and love people who identify openly as GLBT. That's why it is *so* important to come out. As more and more of us come out, people are less and less likely to hate the "concept" of GLBT. Now our lovable, beautiful, human faces are attached to the words: "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," "transgender." Your friends and family, unless coerced by indoctrinated hate, cannot hate you. They will celebrate you and love you, because you are you. It is not natural not to love. It is unnatural to hate. Hate must be taught. And let's be honest. It is religion that teaches it, in most cases. Who first taught anti-Semitism? Who defended the proposition that women are to be obedient to men, and in most cases still keeps them out of the pulpit and away from the altar? From what book were slaves taught to be obedient to their masters? Who first taught that mixing of races was immoral? Who taught that GLBT people are an abomination?

This leaves me troubled.

Shouldn't religion be the "horse" in fostering justice, peace, and love? It claims to be. Shouldn't society be the "cart?" Yet why is it, in every case in western civilization, that the cart dragged the horse toward recognizing the humanity of Jews, women, other races, and now GLBT people?

Why is it "flaunting" one's sexuality if a

GLBT church-worker comes out, while a straight couple wears a big white dress and a tux to church, but that's not flaunting their sexuality?

Why would I apologize for hiding my sexual orientation from religious indoctrinators? Would we expect a Jewish person to apologize for hiding from Nazis?

Why do most of what we consider GLBT-friendly denominations have a "conscience clause" for their clergy so that, if a clergy person's conscience says it is wrong to marry us, they can refuse to marry us? Why is the outward unity of a denomination more important than the GLBT human being?

Why are taxpayer dollars given as vouchers, so that religious schools can indoctrinate children that other children are evil?

Why are we OK with this? Why does religion get a pass to teach people to hate us?

Those are questions with which I am sitting. I am not at peace with this. I am angry about this. I am working through the hatred that religious indoctrination instilled in me, against me. What religious indoctrination did to me was it made me suicidal, anorexic, bulimic, depressed, a heavy smoker, and a heavy drinker — all to comfort myself over the "comfort" of religion. Since I have come out — both out of the closet and out of religion — all those behaviors have literally disappeared for me.

My spirituality, when I can handle calling it that, is gratitude. I am grateful I survived religion.

Family of the GLBT community: members of our family are suffering. Be honest. We must be honest, or more of us will be beat up, be bullied, turn to drugs and alcohol for relief, commit suicide, and be killed. Our people, our children, are suffering and dying at the hands of religiously indoctrinated hate.

What will I do to stop this? ■

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2016 Hyundai Tucson



The message from Hyundai was clear: They need to sell more "trucks."

By "trucks," Hyundai Motor America means leveraging the growth in crossovers, SUVs, and pickups. In their case, it is all about the crossover, where sales have jumped impressively over the past few years. Lower-priced gasoline and growing families drive this segment. In our case, growing GLBT families.

So far, *Lavender* reviewed two of Hyundai's crossover offerings: the Santa Fe and the Santa Fe Sport. Both are considered "mid-sized" models, where its growth has leveled off due to rising prices and, ironically, the need for better fuel efficiency. The real growth is in smaller crossovers, such as the Honda CR-V, the best selling vehicle of its type in America.

Hyundai had some success with its small offering, the Tucson; yet, it never captured the imagination of those that ended up buying its rivals. It was competent, but that's about it. To eat into the sales lead of the CR-V, Nissan Rogue, and the like, it has to be a home run. It

has to offer more in terms of design, comfort, capability, technology, safety, and value.

Maybe this all-new 2016 Hyundai Tucson will fulfill this mission.

To find out whether the third-generation Tucson was up to the challenge, it only took a short drive to the University of Minnesota's East Bank and The Commons Hotel to see for myself. It was just a preview of coming attractions, but what better way to see this new offering from Hyundai up close than to take it on some familiar roads with some fellow journalists visiting our fair Twin Cities.

Before we go any further, there is a lot that is new about the Tucson. It is now lower, more spacious, and full of new technology. That is the simple way to put it, yet there is a lot more to the 2016 Tucson.

Hyundai developed the 2016 Tucson with three attributes in mind: bold and dynamic design, efficient performance, and advanced technology and safety. In terms of design, it is much better to look at, given the familiar brand

cues from the Sonata and Santa Fe Sport. These cues were enhanced with a wide appearing rear bumper, muscular wheel arches, and an overall wedge-like silhouette. Hyundai also increased the wheelbase and overall length from the outgoing model and lowered the Tucson for a better profile. The result is a handsome crossover that is contemporary, but not over the top, visually.

To get efficient performance, the 2016 Tucson had to be lighter, stronger, and on target against its competitors. Curb weights start at 3,325 pounds, which is considered light for a vehicle in its class these days. The difference between the lightest and heaviest 2016 Tucson is about 400 pounds. Hyundai strengthened the structure by using 51 percent advanced high-strength steel, compared to 18 percent on the outgoing model. There is definitely a commitment to solidifying the 2016 Tucson toward better crash protection while increasing the ride quality.

Powering the 2016 Tucson are two engines:

a 2.0-liter four-cylinder carried over the outgoing model and a 1.6-liter turbocharged four-cylinder that was driven in the 2015 Sonata Eco last year. The latter has 175 horsepower, which is matched to a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, as experienced in the Sonata Eco. All models are available in either front- or all-wheel drive. Some models also offer a driver-selected mode to change the way the transmission and engine perform, between Eco, Normal, and Sport. All-wheel drive models come with a system lock that splits power 50/50 front and back for better traction.

The interior actually follows some cues of the newest Hyundai models — the Sonata and Genesis sedans — with a more contemporary setup that is beneficial to the driver. Depending on model, the infotainment screen is standard with a 5-inch or an 8-inch display. You can control apps on the vehicle side with the larger 8-inch screen, which include Yelp and Pandora. Siri eyes-free voice commands are now integrated in the 2016 Tucson. The BlueLink telematics suite also received some enhancements, including connectivity using the Apple-Watch app.

Cargo space did increase over the outgoing Tucson, now at 31 cubic feet behind the second row of seats. The cargo cover can now be stored underneath the floor in the back, or the cover for the floor could be removed to increase the cargo height by two inches.

The 2016 Tucson now offers more safety

technology than before. Standard equipment includes a rearview camera available in both the small and large screens. Other new features to the Tucson include lane departure warning, automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection, blind-spot detection that is now a radar-based system, lane change assist, and rear-cross traffic alert.

While there is a lot to explain on what's new on the 2016 Tucson, one had to put all of these to the test on the road. During this media event, I drove two 2016 Tucson models, a Limited with front-wheel drive and a Sport with all-wheel drive. Both examples had the 1.6-liter turbocharged engine connected to the 7-speed dual-clutch transmission. This is really the engine/transmission combination to get with its quick shifts and good response from the right foot.

Both of these 2016 Tucsons held up well on the wet roads we drove on in Western Wisconsin, mainly in Pierce and Pepin Counties. Handling was quite good, keeping the Tucson level through the curves, while maintaining a smooth ride throughout. Brakes are very good with great stopping power in both normal and panic situations. The Tucson's weakness was in the steering, as it lacked some real feel at the wheel. On-center feel was pretty soft with some play to keep it within the lines. Turning was fine without any need for correction.

I liked how contemporary the 2016 Tucson looked, as it truly was a visual improvement

from the last model. It is a nice vehicle to look at, and that is what we need in this segment. Interior-wise, the new Tucson is roomy, comfortable — both the Sport's cloth and the Limited's leather upholstery were good to the body on longer drives. It is a good vehicle to take on long trips without fatigue.

Pricing for the 2016 Tucson is right in the heart of the class, with a base price for a SE front-drive model of \$22,700. At the top of the range is the Limited with the Ultimate package and all-wheel drive coming in with a base price of \$34,050.

Though Hyundai is making a commitment to sell about 90,000 Tucsons a year in the United States starting in 2016, it is not enough for the brand to catch up with the leaders in its class that are selling between 20,000-30,000 units a month. It is a shame, since this 2016 Hyundai Tucson has the goods to be a leader in its class.

Hyundai wants to expand its footprint of "trucks," especially its three crossover/SUV models. To compete against the leaders is to stress what it does best — be advanced, safer, efficient, powerful, and contemporary. The 2016 Tucson certainly will find plenty of buyers wanting something better than what is being offered currently. It has to. And this is a very good start.

The 2016 Tucson should be at Hyundai dealerships as you are reading this — if not, soon. ■



Just Like Them

I've had the same car mechanic for the past ten years. I've had him through two relationships. Over the past decade, my exes and I regularly drove each other to appointments at his shop and bickered in front of him over the price and necessity of repairs, just like straight couples do. Yet, in all that time, he somehow didn't know I was gay.

I realized this rather stunning fact the day after the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage is allowed under the Constitution.

I'm in a new relationship, but we're not yet at the point where I can ask her for a ride home from the mechanic. We're still in the dazzling early days when I'm reluctant to reveal any weakness, including the fragility of my car's brake system. So, on a day when we weren't together, I arranged to take my car to the shop and asked Stan, my mechanic, for a lift home.

"So," he said as we headed out from the shop, "did you hear about that gay thing?"

"No! What gay thing?" I asked, even though I had, of course, heard about the gay thing. My eyes were still swollen from weeping over the SCOTUS ruling after it came down the day before.

"The gays!" he exclaimed. "They can get married now!"

It was at that moment that I realized that he didn't know that I am one of the gays. I wasn't sure whether to announce my sexual orientation right then or let the conversation play out a bit to see where it was headed. Since I was about 10 miles from home and unsure whether outing myself would mean I'd be kicked out of his car and have to hoof it, I decided to probe a bit deeper.

"Oh, those gays!" I said merrily, careful not to sell out my own people but also mindful of the odometer as it slowly clicked closer to my house. "They're always getting into some type of mad-capped misadventure, aren't they?"

"They're all really happy today, but they won't be for long," he said, staring ahead at the road meaningfully, nodding his head gravely to himself.

"OK, Stan, I'll bite. What's your problem with same-sex marriage?" I asked.

"The guys at the shop and I were talking about it this morning. We've got it figured out," he said.

I've heard several theories set forth by the "guys at the shop" over the years. They generally

involve alien invasions, alien abductions, and sex with aliens. Most recently, they tried to convince me that there is scientific proof that mermaids exist. I really like the "guys at the shop" and feared this new theory would expose their innate homophobia, and I'd have to stop liking them. I braced myself for a ridiculous conspiracy theory that suggested same-sex marriage would lead to toddlers being forced into arranged marriages with kangaroos.

"It's a clever plot," he said. "It's a plot to make the gays miserable. Look at how much fun they have now? Dating forever! Going to parades! Not having to go to your frickin' in-laws' for Christmas dinner. Well, guess what, gays? Fun's over."

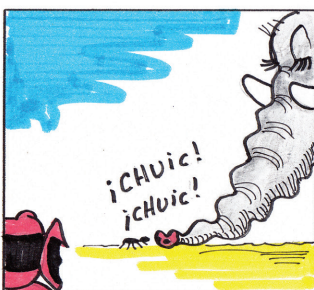
"Wait! So you and the guys don't have a problem with gay marriage. You just have a problem with marriage, in general?" I asked.

"Right! We feel bad for the gays! They had a good thing going," he said. "All those fancy beach vacations wearing Speedos. Now that's over. Now they're just like us."

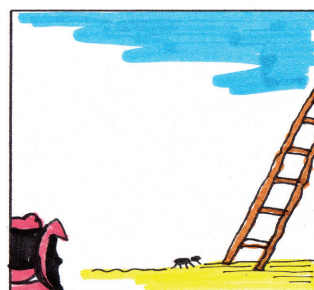
And, he's right. We are just like them now. For better or worse. And just the thought of that made me tear up again. ■

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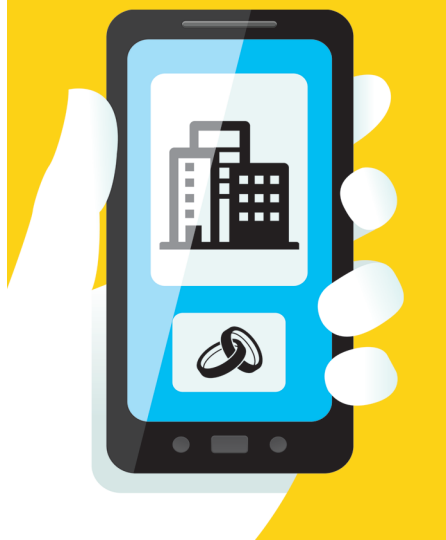
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(800) 248-AIDS (statewide)
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www.mnaidsproject.org

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Everyone Inside

Among stuffed animals and bruised toys, near a wall covered by an "Old McDonald" mural, over a giant rug depicting a small town, I sit in a bright green chair. Even at seven years old, I understand that whoever conceived this room tried too hard to appeal to children; he was in too much of a rush to put much thought into his design. It's cringe-worthy: the wooden building blocks, the Raggedy Ann and Andy, giant puzzle pieces, worn-down crayons, and used Disney-themed coloring books — it's demeaning. The way they speak to me here — they, those glorified guidance counselors — disgusts me. But the lanky woman sitting across from me now is different.

A doctor, she calls herself. In a brown pantsuit and glossy black heels, her darkness is a reprieve from the circus that is this windowless room. She's sitting in a chair meant for a child a quarter her age and a third her height to "connect" with me, to meet me at my level, to make me feel more comfortable, more engaged. Maybe some kids buy it. To me, she looks ridiculous. Her legs are so long that to keep them flat on the ground forces her knees up to her chest. Occasionally she rearranges herself because the position is so awkward.

"Justin, where are the private parts on a boy?" she asks. The question surprises me. *This* is how we're starting?

I point to my front and my rear.

"And what about a girl?"

I point to my front, rear, and chest.

Why does she need to know this? Do I look like an idiot? I roll my eyes and look away. She continues asking questions.

The town drawn on the carpet beneath us

grabs my attention. I study it, squinting to trace its streets, its lonely parks and quiet buildings, searching for signs of life: kids in the schoolyard for recess, construction workers building something new, a friendly policeman patrolling a neighborhood. But Carpet City has no life. I find only emptiness. The only life in this room is on its walls, in the unsettlingly humanlike faces of livestock.

"Justin," she says and crooks her head in an attempt to retake my attention.

"I'm here," I say, still exploring Carpet City. Maybe all of the people who live there are inside the buildings.

"Justin, do you love everyone?"

"Yes."

"Is there anyone you don't love?"

"No." I know that's what she wants to hear. I want to go home.

"Has anyone ever hurt you?"

I'm increasingly disturbed that there are no people depicted in Carpet City.

"Justin, sweetie. Will you look at me?"

"I can't remember," I say. My heart starts racing. Carpet City. *Where are all the people?*

"Would you tell me if someone did?"

I look at her finally. She wants me to say yes, I know, otherwise this question wouldn't be so important to her. But I can't remember. And I'm sick. The room starts to spin and I'm suddenly claustrophobic. The only door out is closed. There are no windows. I'm trapped in here with her, like the people are trapped in the buildings of Carpet City.

The animals on the walls begin to move. They're whispering something to me. I want to listen but the doctor keeps interrupting.

She squats next to me. "Calm down, Justin," she says monotonously. She's used this line so many times to so many kids she can't even fake concern.

And I start crying. I cry for all the prisoners of the city beneath.

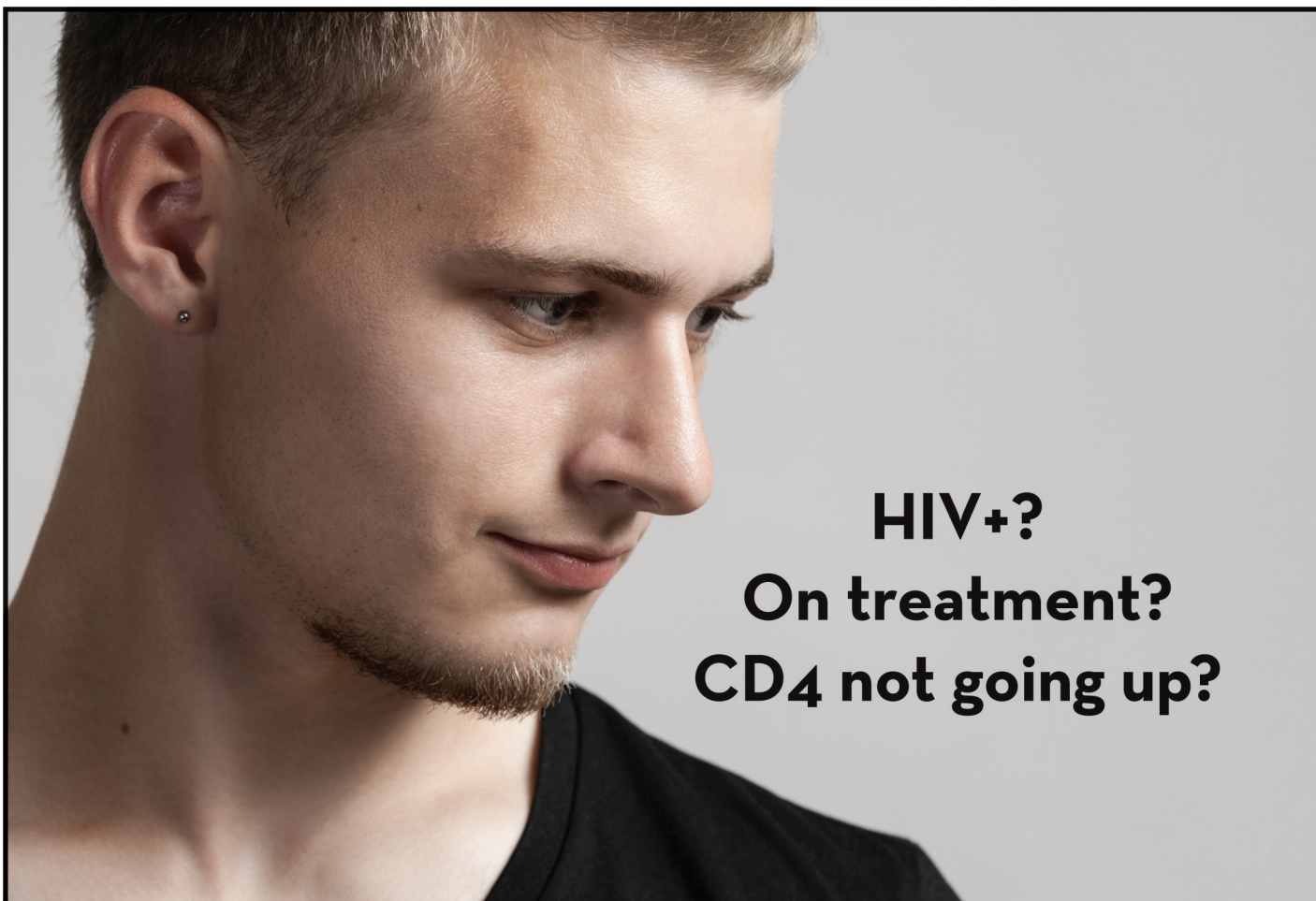
My mini-breakdown lasts for a minute or two. Once I'm "stable," the doctor stands up and leaves the room for several minutes. She returns with water in a paper cup, laughing at a coworker's joke.

She finishes our appointment by yawning between boring questions about what dreams I have and what I think they mean.

She will later tell my mother at the receptionist's desk after our session that everything is fine, that there's nothing to worry about, that I did great, was focused, and happy during our time together. She'll pat my head, kneel beside me, look me in the face with hardly attempted concern, and offer me a lollipop. I'll decline and this will surprise her. I'll hate her as much as I do the bullshit toys in her cheerful torture chamber.

In the car on the way home my mother will ask me how I liked my time with Dr. Whatever, and I will tell her it was just as wonderful as the doctor said, and gosh, how nice a lady she was. I'll lie because the doctor must've had a reason for not telling my mother about my meltdown. No, I won't say anything about it. I won't be the tattletale my uncle likes to call me. ■

ThroughTheseEyes.JustinJones@gmail.com



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